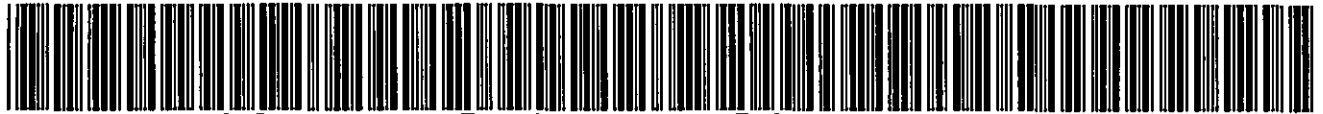


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IFES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT: MALAWI
FINAL ACTIVITY REPORT

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Prepared by Laurie Cooper

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I. INTRODUCTION

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) conducted a technical assistance project from January 8 through May 21, 1994. Originally intended as three components of the United Nations Electoral Assistance Secretariat (UNEAS) project, the technical assistance was combined with an international observer delegation which monitored the registration process and joined the 300-member Joint International Observer Group (JIOG) for the May elections. This project was funded by a cooperative agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Malawi. As part of the Secretariat, the IFES team also worked with members of the Commonwealth Secretariat and the National Democratic Institute (NDI).

The IFES team was composed of thirteen persons, consisting of two seven-member observer teams, three advisors and the Project Manager. During the project, the team members operated from regional capital offices in Lilongwe, Blantyre and Mzuzu, in addition to residing in individual districts as requested.

The combined objectives of the project were the following:

- a) to increase the administrative and training capabilities of the Malawi Electoral Commission and staff;
- b) to assist the Malawi Electoral Commission to implement a new system of voter registration and recording;
- c) to develop a capacity within the Commission and Malawi's journalist community to provide ongoing information about the transition and election process;
- d) to monitor compliance with and administration of Malawi's new registration regulations; and
- e) to observe compliance with new election regulations as well as international standards for free and fair elections.

Context

The 1994 IFES technical assistance project in Malawi represents the fourth combined effort of the international community in the facilitation of the country's democratic transition. In October 1992 and March 1993, IFES formed part of two international assessment missions to Malawi coordinated by the United Nations Electoral Assistance Unit (UNEAU-see Relevant Reports). The findings of those missions were used to develop the IFES' pre-referendum technical assistance project, implemented from April through June 1993. The project combined civic education, long-term monitoring and election worker training programs (see Nyali Means Change) to complement a larger international observer group and ongoing technical advice of the UN Electoral Assistance Secretariat (UNEAS).

From a technical and practical standpoint, the complementary relationship between IFES and the UNEAS for the 1993 project was quite successful. IFES provided the technical capability to the project, which was supplemented and organized by the Logistics advisor of the Secretariat. The Secretariat was able to serve as a resource and coordinator for other organizations working in Malawi. All parties to the development of the 1994 pre-election project expressed the hope that the coordination exercise would be completed as well in 1994 as in 1993.

Following the June 14, 1993 referendum, IFES maintained contact with USAID Malawi, UNDP-Lilongwe and the UNEAU in New York for information regarding the transition process, the creation of the National Consultative and Executive Councils, and the legislation that the bodies enacted and repealed. IFES discussed the lessons learned from the referendum and areas where it could provide assistance with the UN in New York, with USAID Malawi, and with the National Democratic Institute.

For IFES, the next steps in Malawi were developed from its previous experiences. Voter registration, with an eye toward the development of a more efficient system of procedure and recording, was the primary area of interest. Next, a newly-inaugurated Electoral Commission would have to review a number of election-related issues, such as the voting process, the counting and recording of ballots, as it prepared to organize the May elections. IFES was prepared to provide general as well as specific administration advice. Finally, the new Electoral Commission, in the spirit of Malawi's other transitional institutions, was to guarantee a transparent, open process in part through its own transparency. IFES identified a potential need to encourage cooperation between the Commission and Malawian journalists to provide the kind of election information needed in a democratic nation.

IFES submitted a proposal to USAID/Malawi in August 1993 for a three-part technical assistance project. Three advisors would work with the Electoral Commission in the areas of election administration, voter registration and public information. The advisors would form part of the UN Electoral Assistance Secretariat, but would conduct individual program activities using IFES funds, administered by the onsite Project Manager. As was the case last year, the Secretariat would be responsible for the general logistics arrangements of the IFES team.

Upon approval of the proposal, IFES selected three consultants to serve as advisors with the Secretariat. Jean-Marc Lafrenière, an informatics expert from Québec, was selected as the Voter Registration Advisor. Mr. Lafrenière managed UN programs in census data gathering for medium-term projects in Equatorial Guinea, the Central African Republic and Rwanda, and currently works as a consultant for the Justice Ministry of the Government of Québec. Louise McDonough was contracted as the Election Administration Advisor. She is the Registrar for County Kerry in Ireland, a position she has held since 1976, and the Returning Officer for Kerry North and South Constituencies. For the Public Information Advisor, IFES selected Dr. Peter Miller, currently on a one year leave from Northwestern University in Illinois, where he served

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for five years as Director of the Institute for Modern Communications, and as an Associate Professor for ten years. Dr. Miller worked in Nicaragua at its 1989 elections and was part of the IFES US-USSR Election Official Exchange Project Team in 1990. Laurie Cooper, IFES Program Officer for Africa and the Near East was the on-site Project Manager.

In accordance with its grant, IFES has produced and submitted to USAID/Malawi activity reports on this project for the last quarter 1993 and the first quarter of 1994. In the background and project description (Sections III and IV), this report will summarize activities for the two quarters above, then continue with the report for the second quarter of 1994. Section VI, "Election Day Observation", combines district observations with technical comments and recommendations. Finally, this report will review the level of coordination and organization of the IFES project in particular and the Secretariat in general.

II. INITIATION OF PROJECT ACTIVITY

Laurie Cooper, Jean-Marc Lafrenière, Louise McDonough and Peter Miller arrived in Malawi during the week of January 10, 1994. The offices of the UN Electoral Assistance Secretariat were in the process of being equipped and staffed by Michael Meadowcroft, UNEAS Coordinator. His arrival preceded the IFES team by approximately a week. As he had served in Malawi as an advisor to the National Consultative Council throughout the previous fall, he was able to brief the team and provide some orientation. The IFES members were the first after Meadowcroft to arrive, but were joined within two weeks by Bob McLeod, the Boundaries/Districting Advisor; Kevin Bampton, Legal Advisor; and Eugenie Lucas, Civic Education Advisor, with more advisors expected. The team met with Cynthia Rozell, Director of USAID/Malawi, as well as Stephanie Funk and Tom Lofgren, the Program Officers for the IFES Project. The group made an informal presentation to the subcommittee of the international donor community at a regular meeting hosted by UNDP/Malawi.

The schedule of the IFES team's arrival was arranged to coincide with the beginning of the primary activities of the new National Electoral Commission. Composed of seven members, each nominated by one of the currently registered political parties, and chaired by a Justice of the High Court, the Commission received its mandate in the middle of December 1993. With the elections less than six months away, it was expected that the IFES advisors would be able to offer assistance in a timely manner as the Commission was organizing itself. As the team traveled to Blantyre to meet the Commissioners, the Commission was just returning from a country-wide inspection of political boundaries. Its first assignment was to review Malawi's 141 existing constituency boundaries, and to create new constituencies as necessary to ensure fair representation. The delimitation of constituencies in any country is a controversial task; the Commission reported that several of the traditional authorities resisted the idea of new constituencies over which they could not exercise control. The length of time spent on the boundary issues also complicated the second task of the Commission, which was to prepare to register the electorate. The rules for eligibility of registration were numerous and complicated by the absence of clear boundaries at this stage.

The boundary delimitation issues kept the full Commission occupied for a number of days following the IFES team's arrival. Nevertheless, the members of the Commission divided their duties according to their skills and interests during their early January meeting with Michael Meadowcroft, Bob McLeod, and the IFES advisors. At that time, the Commissioners indicated that two of them would base themselves in Lilongwe to work directly with the National Electoral Commission Secretariat, and the rest would be based in Blantyre and Zomba. In response to this decision, Louise McDonough planned to return to Lilongwe, with Jean-Marc Lafrenière and Peter Miller remaining in Blantyre.

At the end of the third week of the project, the IFES team members discussed their observations and meetings, as well as a general workplan for the duration of their individual activities.

A. Election Administration

Louise McDonough worked with the "Critical Path" subcommittee, consisting of Mrs. Justice Msosa, Mr. Mwambetania and Mr. Chipeta to develop an election calendar for the next three and a half months. She reviewed the Electoral Law and the training manual from the June 1993 referendum and began to prepare a draft for this year's manual. During the month of February, she would travel to individual districts with Jean-Marc Lafrenière to meet with District Commissioners and discuss the procedures and their evaluation of the referendum exercise. In addition, that month would be focused on the training of registration officials. Following a one-month stay in Ireland, McDonough would return to Malawi in mid-April to train election official trainers.

B. Voter Registration

Jean-Marc Lafrenière met with the Critical Path subcommittee to specify the tasks required for the voter registration period, which was the next priority of the Commission following the delineation of constituency boundaries. He met with officials from the Bureau of Statistics to

prepare estimates on the amount of supplies and logistical support required for the registration process. Traveling to Zomba, the federal capital, he reviewed the forms that were to be used by the voters and the officials for the period. His plans for the next two months focused on the registration period, during which he would offer advice, comment on procedures and observe the process directly in all three regions. Following the close of registration, Lafrenière would assist the Commission with the presentation of the voters lists for inspection and begin to develop recommendations for the computerization of the register.

C. Public Information

Peter Miller met with Commissioner Charles Joya to develop a strategy for the Commission which would begin and continue to keep the public informed about the registration and election processes. Peter proposed that a Press Secretary be retained by the Commission, who would be responsible for organizing press releases and briefings, as well as obtaining information gleaned from media outlets regarding problems observed. The Press Secretary would be responsible to the Commissioner designated as spokesperson; however, this duty would rotate depending on the issue. He also met with the Malawi Commission for UNESCO, an organization which had approached the UN Electoral Assistance Secretariat for assistance in organizing seminars for journalists. Together, Miller and UNESCO designed a series of seminars to be held consecutively in each regional capital. The seminars would review presentations and discuss topics related to the role of the media in a democracy, as well as the specific procedures to be followed for this election. He also planned to develop a mechanism for monitoring the broadcasts of the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) and the newspapers currently in circulation.

From February 21 to 23, the National Consultative Council hosted a Constitutional Conference in Blantyre. The draft of the Constitution would be announced and debated during the conference. Peter Miller corresponded and met regularly with senior officials from the Malawi

Broadcasting Corporation to discuss their coverage of the conference. In an historic activity for the MBC, the proceedings of each day were broadcast in their entirety the following day. This coverage was to be followed up with MBC officials conducting discussion groups in each regional capital.

During late January and early February, Miller proposed the commission of a public opinion survey during the registration process to measure voter awareness and attitudes. The Electoral Commission, while not discouraging the idea outright, was uninterested in possible association with such a survey; they felt that even politically neutral questions would provide detractors with enough information to add a political twist to the results. Miller proposed next that this activity be commissioned by IFES or another private entity and treated as an independent project activity. However, there was not enough time before Miller's late February departure to complete the required research or to attract the level of financial support needed for this venture.

D. New Project Component

At the time that the IFES technical assistance project was developed, the need for long-term monitors was viewed to be less urgent than it was during the registration and campaign periods of 1993. For that reason, no election monitoring or observer element was included in the original project proposal. However, continued discussions among the donor community indicated that some modified form of the previous monitoring effort would be beneficial to the Electoral Commission. IFES therefore proposed to send seven observers to Malawi for three weeks to observe the registration period. The Project Manager returned to Washington, D.C. at the end of January to select the observers. She accompanied them to Malawi on February 27, 1994. Ted Sneed and Susan Wynne, former Peace Corps Volunteers in Malawi and members of the 1993 referendum observer delegation, were joined by Tessy Bakary, Professor of Political Science at Laval University in Canada (and participant at the August UN Roundtable on

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Malawi's transition process); Willard Lotter, former Peace Corps Director in Malawi; Yinka Oyinlola, a political/economic analyst and member of the IFES observer delegation in Angola; Hilda Pemberton, Chair of the Prince George's County (MD) Council; and Jill Rhodes, an attorney currently working on African constitutional issues.

Following briefings on February 27 and 28, the IFES observers were posted to districts in the Central and Southern Regions to complement the observers currently in the Northern and Central Regions.

III. ACTIVITIES DURING REGISTRATION AND PRE-ELECTION PERIODS

A. February 27 - March 31

The registration period was scheduled to begin February 21 and conclude on March 12. In the interest of saving time and facilitating voter education efforts, the Electoral Commission decided to retain the process employed in 1993, with slight modifications. According to these procedures, each registration center is staffed by three officers. One officer fills out the registration certificate with the voter's name, village, and traditional authority. A second official enters the certificate information in the voter register, a booklet of 25 pages with 2 carbon copies. The third official endorses the back of the certificate with the registration stamp and the certificate serial number, which corresponds to the line, page number and booklet in which the voter's name is recorded. The voter is then issued the certificate with a plastic sleeve to keep until election day. The Commission stressed from the beginning of the registration period that only certificates from this period would be acceptable proof of eligibility on registration day.

Most registration officials indicated a moderate to low registration turnout from February 21 to March 10. In response to this, the Electoral Commission announced on March 11 an extension of the close of registration from March 12 to March 26. The peak days were March 11 and 12, with a steady decline for the first week after the extension, then increasing rapidly until March 26. By March 24, the Electoral Commission reported that 3.1 million persons had registered, with an optimistic prediction that the final count would approach 4 million. 3.1 million is approximately 2/3 of the total number of voters registered for the referendum. The final figures, as of May 27, report a total of 3.8 million people registered, approximately 79% of the total number of eligible Malawian voters.

There were a number of technical problems which directly affected the registration period. The first, which the Electoral Commission sought to change for two months, was a group of provisions in the Electoral Law. The law, drafted by the National Consultative Council, permitted voters to register either where they live, where they work, or where they intended to

be on election day. This provision in normal circumstances opens the electoral system to various types of abuse by candidates and voters alike. In Malawi, the situation was complicated by the new constituency boundaries.

A second problem was the continued dispute between the Commission and the security and military forces. The Inspector General declared in February that the military and police forces would not be permitted to register to vote. The rationale given was that as armed forces, neither the members of the forces nor their families should involve themselves in politics even by the act of voting. The Electoral Commission insisted that the ban on military personnel registration be lifted, and made continued statements that members of the police force were also eligible to register. Following the extension of the registration period to March 26, registration centers were opened near military barracks so that personnel and their families would be able to register without having to return to their homes.

B. Observation

When the IFES international observer team arrived on February 27, they were deployed to areas that had not yet been visited, to 13 of Malawi's 24 districts in the Central and Southern regions from February 29 through March 26. Each observer visited at least 55 registration sites. Some worked individually for the first few days, but collaborated with each other and with other international observers in the last two weeks. Observers concentrated on the following issues and raised relevant questions:

- How is the registration process going?
- How many monitors from how many parties are present?
- Were registration officials briefed? How well trained in procedures?
- What are the current figures?
- What problems exist?

The observers generally conducted interviews first with the officials, then separately with monitors, often separating them by party affiliation, in order to hear concerns that they might not otherwise have voiced. When the Secretariat received news of the extension, all observers were invited to stay as long as they could. Will Lotter, Yinka Oyinlola, Jill Rhodes and Ted Sneed continued observing in Malawi until the end of the period.

The observers reported and investigated complaints regarding intimidation of registering voters. The most common complaint was that village headmen, recruited by or acting for the Malawi Congress Party, told voters that they would be punished or their relief food withheld if they did not vote for the MCP. Other headmen purchased certificates from registered voters. The Electoral Commission responded to the complaints by issuing press releases and holding press conferences to urge people not to sell their certificates. Observers also investigated reports that army commanders were not allowing personnel enough time off duty for them to register.

C. Registration Advice

Jean-Marc Lafrenière initiated work on the registration process by discussing the possibility of amending the system with the critical path subcommittee. As the registration period was imminent, the Commission thought that using the same system and new documents (registration books and certificates) would be more efficient than implementing a new system. Lafrenière functioned as a liaison between the Commission, the Chief Electoral Officer and the government printing vendors to ensure that the materials were printed in time for the registration. In addition, he assisted the Chief Electoral Officer and his deputy during the three training sessions for registrars so that the instructions provided would be accurate. Throughout the registration process, Lafrenière traveled to each region in Malawi, inspecting registration sites and reporting on their progress to the Secretariat in Lilongwe. As the registration extension drew to a close, he was requested by the Commission to develop a plan for the official closure, inspection and

updating of the register. This process included the storage of registration records. From March 19 through 21, he met with District Commissioners (DCs) in the regional capitals to present the plan and train the DCs in the close and recording procedures. After traveling to each district and viewing the manner in which registers were kept, Lafrenière purchased through IFES filing cabinets and supplies for each district, the Lilongwe Secretariat Office, and the Blantyre Commission office.

D. Election Administration

Near the end of February, the draft of the new polling officers manual had been submitted to the Electoral Commission for review. During the first week in March, McDonough and UN Training Advisor Mariela Lopez presented drafts of the manual, the Official Report (to be filled in as a record of polling station activity) and instructions on how to fill out the report to the Electoral Commission. McDonough and Lopez drafted additional forms for auditing the ballot trail, for computing the election results, and for the receipt of materials, which were presented in the second week of March. They also participated in discussions with the Commission on a ballot design submitted by Delarue Printrak, and the type and amount of civic education needed to introduce such ballots to Malawian voters. While they awaited for approval of the polling station officers' manual from the Commission, Lopez and McDonough obtained quotes from printers and located an illustrator. Upon approval by the Commission, fifteen thousand copies of the manual in English, Chichewa and Tombuka were printed by IFES. They developed a training program to begin in mid-April and continue for approximately two weeks. Finally, McDonough and Lopez observed the registration process in Lilongwe District for four days during the period. McDonough left Malawi on March 12.

E. Public Information

The appropriateness of the voter opinion survey discussed in Part II came into question in March as other private firms openly affiliated with political parties began conducting opinion polls late in the registration period. Given the level of tension, at least in the villages, regarding the purchase of voter certificates and intimidation or coercion to vote for one party, the chance that the voter would indeed consider his or her vote secret in the face of so many surveys was reduced considerably.

Peter Miller worked with Morgan Mayani, Press Secretary of the Electoral Commission, and Emmanuel Kondowe, Program Officer for Communication with the Malawi Commission for UNESCO on the preparation of the seminar entitled "The Role of the Press in Democratic Societies." The seminar was organized to achieve the following objectives:

- to sensitize Malawian journalists on professional ethics;
- to contribute to the free flow of information and ideas nationally and internationally; and
- to contribute to the establishment of a strong, independent Malawian press.

Miller, Mayani and Kondowe selected, from a number of papers presented, the following discussion topics: Public Access to Information and Participation in the Information Process; The Journalist's Dedication to Objective Reality; the Current State of the Independent Press in Malawi; Legal Limitations, Dangers and How to Avoid Them; and Elimination of War and Other Evils Confronting Humanity. "Issues in Covering the General Election," written by Peter Miller, was the featured paper for the seminars. The flagship seminar was conducted from February 21-25 and was videotaped for discussion purposes at subsequent meetings in Mzuzu, Blantyre and Lilongwe. IFES financed the video production as well as organization costs. A total of 52 journalists from the numerous newspapers in Malawi and from the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation attended the sessions. One-day sessions were held in Mzuzu on March 13; in Lilongwe on March 16; and Blantyre on March 19. The Malawi Commission for

UNESCO submitted a report on the proceedings of the seminars to IFES; the following remarks are excerpted from that report.

The one-day seminars were hosted and moderated by Morgan Mayani, Press Secretary of the Electoral Commission. Participants described some of the constraints involved in coverage. For example, one common complaint about the newspapers is that their coverage of issues and circulation is limited to the metropolitan areas, with a dearth of local language articles. While the journalists recognized the need to use their influence in the rural areas, they pointed out that as businesses they had to target those people who could afford to pay for the newspapers, usually in metropolitan areas. They also discussed the lack of any type of formal journalism education in Malawi, attributing it to the previous government's practices of censorship and curtailment of personal freedoms.

In Lilongwe, the journalists were addressed by Tim Neale, a media advisor from the Commonwealth Secretariat who worked with the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation between 1964 and 1967. His remarks were focused on editorial guidelines - how one determines what "news" is as opposed to "propaganda"; that a journalist's credibility is enhanced rather than diminished if he or she admits to honest mistakes.

The Blantyre seminar featured Moland Nkhata, of the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation. This seminar emphasized radio coverage. One issue raised in the session was that of balance in news stories. In Malawi, the single factor which affects each media organ's credibility is the consistent lack of balance in reporting news events. This phenomenon, occurring because most of the newspapers are owned by politically active entrepreneurs, means that it was rare for any paper to present positive stories about more than one party without reflexive criticism of the others.

UNESCO cited three achievements at the conclusion of the seminar series: 1) journalists were able to discuss their role in Malawi's democratic transition without fear of offending the Malawi Congress Party; 2) they succeeded in having a provision of the penal code repealed which previously required 5 years imprisonment for seditious acts; 3) the participants recognized the need to educate themselves regarding their rights and responsibilities under the current law as well as future laws related to the press in Malawi. In addition, the Electoral Commission was able to connect with the press in a new way for Malawi. First, the Commission encouraged the political parties to issue press releases and make campaign announcements in local languages. Second, it urged journalists to assist it by bringing documented cases of election law violations. The continued involvement of Mr. Mayani in the seminar proceedings strengthened the credibility and influence of the Commission.

F. Personnel Issues

When the IFES team arrived in January, the Secretariat had been unable to identify a Logistics Advisor. The person who occupied this position would be responsible for working with members of the Secretariat, the Joint International Observer Group, and the Electoral Commission as appropriate to organize the logistical support required during the registration and election processes. In February, since a Logistics Advisor had not yet been located, UN Electoral Assistance Coordinator Michael Meadowcroft asked Jean-Marc Lafrenière to take on the position. He was working in that position when the international observers arrived; however, he resumed work as the Registration Advisor during the middle of March, following the announcement of the extension of the registration period. Meadowcroft approached Ted Sneed, requesting that he take the position of Logistics Advisor from mid-March through the end of the project. Following discussions with IFES, Sneed transferred from observer to Logistics Advisor.

IV. ELECTION PREPARATION ACTIVITIES: APRIL 1 - JULY 31

The second quarter of 1994 and the final quarter of the IFES Technical Assistance Project saw all aspects of the project in operation at once. IFES developed and implemented a system for the storage of registration records; printed the training manual for Presiding Officers; assisted in the training of Presiding Officers; organized seminars for coverage of election night; and returned seven observers for the May 17 general elections.

A. Voter Registration

Jean-Marc Lafrenière continued to assist the Electoral Commission with the storage and preparation for inspection of the voter register through the month of April. With documents that were approved by the Electoral Commission in the last week of March, he traveled to the regional capitals to explain the closeout procedures. Each registration center filled out a final report form, to which the original and duplicate pages of the register books were attached. The head of the registration center retained the triplicate copy of the register for voter inspection.

While visiting the offices of various District Commissioners, Lafrenière inspected the place where registers were kept. In most cases, the possibility of the registers being destroyed was high; either by mold (caused by the humidity) or by bugs. In addition, the manner in which previous records were currently stored was not orderly and would not facilitate attempts to revise the register. To alleviate this problem, IFES purchased 35 filing cabinets (one per district/subdistrict), and ten for the master list in the Lilongwe offices, with supplies to organize the registers by constituency. The file cabinets were delivered to the offices during the week of April 15 and were put to use immediately.

In Lilongwe, Lafrenière worked with the Chief Electoral Officer and the staff to assemble the registration results which were still coming in from the districts. This pushed the timetable for inspection back from the last week in April to the first week in May. Candidates for Parliament

seats were instructed to review registers in their District Commissioner's office, while Presidential candidates were to review the lists in Lilongwe.

B. Election Administration

The final version of the training manual, now entitled "Polling Station Officers' Manual" was approved by the Commission and printed during the second week in April in English; in Chichewa and Tombuka at the end of April. The manuals were distributed during training sessions and included in the materials delivered to polling stations two days before the elections. IFES financed the English printing of the manual, and identified the manual's illustrator.

Louise McDonough returned to Malawi on April 15. She joined Mariela Lopez in organizing national and regional briefings for District Commissioners, Assistant District Commissioners and representatives from the National Electoral Commission to review the new procedures and to set up training schedules for each district. In a modification from the 1993 IFES program design, the Electoral Commission requested that all of the Presiding Officers be trained, rather than a small group of core trainers. The training team, coordinated by Mariela Lopez, included McDonough; Laurie Cooper; Clover Thompson, Jocelyn Lucas and Albert Arhin, three trainers provided by the Commonwealth Secretariat; and Lynnan Shaw, a local community education trainer with the Blantyre Synod of the Church of Scotland. Two trainers were assigned to each region - Cooper/Arhin to the North, McDonough/Thompson to the Central, and Lucas/Shaw to the South. At the April 20 national briefing in Lilongwe, the training teams met with the District Commissioners in their respective regions to plan the schedule for Presiding Officer training sessions. Following the national briefing, the trainers traveled to the regional capitals to conduct a second briefing on April 28 to the local District Commissioners and Supervisory Presiding Officers (Presiding Officers assigned to more than one polling station).

The national and regional briefings were organized to provide participants with updated information on procedures from the National Election Commission. In addition, the presence of a member of the Commission at the regional and national briefings provided opportunities for many District Commissioners to bring inquiries directly to the Commission. The questions put to the Commissioners alerted the Commission to discrepancies or ambiguities in their directions. The formats of the national and regional briefings were arranged so that the District Commissioners would be familiar with the methods used to train Presiding Officers, with the opportunity to provide constructive criticism to the training team. The national and regional briefings took place in an atmosphere of cooperation and enthusiasm, as all of the participants at this level were part of the training program prior to the June 1993 referendum.

At the national and regional briefings, the trainers presented the new manual, concentrating on changes from the referendum procedures. Following the description of the election process, the trainers conducted simulation exercises. They also simulated the counting procedures. The trainers were equipped with all of the forms that Presiding Officers would need to fill out for the election - the account for ballot papers, Official Record and Summary forms for both elections, checklists of election equipment, notices of the results, and district-level tally sheets. They used sample ballots produced by the De La Rue Company, but began their training schedule with ballots printed a month in advance by the National Democratic Institute.

Approximately 4,000 Presiding Officers were to be trained throughout Malawi. The training team was assigned to conduct sessions in pairs by district. Each team was assigned to cover eight districts, with the Northern Region team assisting the Central Region team for the last two days of the training period. The numbers of session participants ranged from 70 to 150; each training pair decided among themselves whether to split the sessions or to train together.

More than half of the session participants worked as Presiding Officers during the Referendum; however, the procedural changes brought up many of the same questions asked last year ("What do we do when someone presents an old registration certificate? Suppose someone places a ballot in the discard box? What if someone comes to vote, has a certificate, but is obviously not 18 years old?"). Presiding Officers in Malawi were drawn primarily from the education and health sectors. The number of women Presiding Officers averaged 6% of the total number in each session.

As in the national and regional briefings, the trainers took sample ballots, ballot envelopes, forms, and the intended ballot boxes to each district for the training sessions. They also distributed civic education posters, pamphlets describing the voting procedure and other materials for the Presiding Officers to share with their neighbors. Participants improvised where necessary for voting booths and discard boxes.

Each session lasted between two and four hours. The teams encouraged participants to read the manual outside of the sessions, so that the simulation time could be maximized. This worked in sessions with a large number of returning Presiding Officers. Other groups required more in-depth coverage of the manual. The team strove in each case to respect the knowledge that the Presiding Officers already possessed and to contribute positively to that knowledge.

C. Public Information

Peter Miller returned to Malawi on April 12. Upon arrival, he resumed his regular work with the Electoral Commission, drafting press releases, advising newspaper editors and working with the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC). In addition, he identified three areas of concentration during the run-up to the elections. First, he planned to conduct seminars for District Information Officers and MBC personnel on election coverage. Next, he would plan

another briefing for journalists regarding the complete election procedure, with information on how to cover the elections in an informative and interesting manner. Finally, he planned to work with the journalists to develop a code of ethics to be used in election coverage. By the time of the election, Miller had added the setup of an election night reporting center to the above activities.

From April 28 to May 2, Miller conducted briefings in Mzuzu, Lilongwe and Blantyre for District Information Officers, MBC personnel and local journalists. The purpose of the briefings was to familiarize participants with their responsibilities regarding coverage of the voting and counting, as well as with the election procedures. District Information Officers were paired with MBC personnel in each district to provide ongoing results. Journalists, in addition to learning the election procedures, were informed about the credentials that they needed to move about the polling stations. Morgan Mayani and Molland Nkhata served as trainers during the briefings. The Polling Station Officers' Manual was distributed to all of the participants. Approximately 100 people in total attended the briefings. These briefings combined two of the above activities, and brought together two groups who viewed each other as potential adversaries.

Following the seminars, Miller turned to the work of developing an "election central" from which the public would receive information on the returns. He set up a conference room and office space in Lilongwe, linked with the Lilongwe studio of the MBC. The UNEAS purchased time on the MBC from 6 pm on May 17 until the afternoon of May 18, so that the results could be broadcast all night. IFES provided accommodation and meals for the personnel who staffed phones and recorded the results. For the first time that most Malawians could remember, MBC provided live coverage of polling station results from all over the country as they were released by the District Commissioners. The Electoral Commission demonstrated its commitment to transparency by allowing the results to be broadcast by polling station rather than assembling

the votes by constituency. This procedure made the process of keeping private tallies difficult, but the import of the open nature of the MBC outweighed this inconvenience.

D. Election Observation

Five of the seven observers of the registration process (Bakary, Lotter, Oyinlola, Rhodes, Wynne) were joined by John Malone, World Bank Resident Representative in Malawi from 1989-1991, and Leroy Vail, Chair of the Committee on African Studies at Harvard University. All arrived on May 10 and May 11. The five observers from the registration period were selected as Senior District Observers and deployed on May 12. Tessy Bakary was assigned to Mulanje; Will Lotter to Ntchisi; John Malone, to Thyolo; Yinka Oyinlola, to Mangochi; Jill Rhodes to Zomba, Leroy Vail, to Blantyre; and Susan Wynne was the Senior District Observer in Lilongwe. Laurie Cooper served as the Senior District Observer for Nkhata Bay. Senior District Observers were charged with the following duties: to assemble the observers assigned to their district; to determine a deployment route for the observers; to provide background information to observers where appropriate; to observe the delivery of results and equipment to the District Commissioner's office throughout the evening of the election; to gather observations and impressions from the district team the following day; and to prepare a district report for the regional statement drafting group.

In addition to the Joint International Observer Group responsibilities, the IFES observers were asked to prepare reports on the districts where they served. Following are excerpts from those reports.

1. Blantyre (Southern Region)

... We divided responsibilities so as to maximize our effectiveness. Dr. Leggett, who speaks the local language, interviewed voters to test for intimidation and to gauge the time electors had to spend in the process. Karen Jensen, the Danish MP and a veteran of monitoring the Albanian elections, concentrated upon the registration books, the certificates, and other technical aspects of the process. I myself interviewed polling officials to see if adequate materials were present, to see if they felt they had the support of the District Commissioner, and to hear their personal views of the election process. I also interviewed party monitors to discover if there were irregularities and/or intimidation.

It was our unanimous opinion that in each and every polling station we investigated, irregularities were minimal, and that the spirit of freedom and fairness was pursued by all with energy. That said, however, I should note criticisms that were made. ...A common complaint centered on the discard box, with it said that many (some? a few?) electors had wasted their vote by inserting them in the second slot of the discard box. ...The voting booth was the major bottleneck in the process.

The passionate commitment of Malawians to this experiment in democracy was brought home to me on the bus from Lilongwe to Blantyre. I sat beside a Malawian traveling from Karonga to Blantyre [899 kilometers] solely to vote; and I was deeply moved.

2. Lilongwe (Central Region)

Traditional authorities from chiefs to village headmen were threatened during this [registration and campaign] period with the loss of their position if they did not actively suppress opposition

party activity in their areas. Villagers, in turn, were threatened with expulsion from their village home and land. The chiefs in the remaining constituencies were either supporters of opposition parties (Chief Kalolo in West) or simply were less responsive to MCP pressure. It is difficult for outsiders to assess the impact of efforts to intimidate villagers on their choices at the polls on May 17. It must be assumed to have had some impact.

A complaint filed by observers in L. Msinja concerns Chioza School where MP Mr. Kadzongwe visited the center and "actively campaigned" in view of voter lines. The Presiding Officer had no complaint book, so he did not entertain efforts by UDF and AFORD monitors to report the MP's actions.

Deployment of polling staff by the DC's office did not go smoothly. Some staff at centers in L. North did not reach their centers until the early morning hours of May 17. Most centers lacked stationery and other materials of secondary importance. Staff improvised to cope with these problems. Many centers also experienced difficulties getting a sufficient number of the correct ballots for their constituency resulting in delays in opening the polls and the use of improper ballot papers. Kam'pheratsoka School in L. North did not receive any presidential ballots until 9:30 am.

Observers were impressed by the generally calm and proficient conduct of the poll by the officials and by the committed and dignified participation of the voters. Polling day passed in an atmosphere of fairness with no serious irregularity.

No constituencies in the district had close or disputed results. It is unlikely, therefore, that the various technical problems identified will have had an impact on the outcome of the election. Similarly, it does not appear that the participation of under-age or unqualified voters was extensive enough to have had a significant effect on the reported results.

3. Zomba (Southern Region)

The District Commissioner's office facilitated the smooth flow of information and education to most polling centers. Two days prior to the election, DC Kalilangwe set up a simulated polling center behind his office. With the majority of the Presiding Officers present, Kalilangwe addressed most potential problems that would be raised on election day. This even extended to someone grabbing the box and running away with it. His extensive training was one reason few problems arose on polling day.

Closing the poll was more complicated and problems often arose here. As mentioned, there was a problem with ballots in the discard box. Also, the tallying was not properly explained and therefore took an excessive amount of time. Although the presiding officers at each station were allowed [instructed by the Manual] to open ballots, the Supervisory Presiding Officer often opened each ballot. That meant that one person opened as many or more than 5,000 envelopes.

4. Thyolo (Southern Region)

There were no serious difficulties at the 14 centers we visited on Election Day. Some secondary materials (stamp pads, paper clips, polling staff badges, large envelopes, etc.) were in short supply in some of the centers. Voters arrived hours before opening, and queues had been cleared almost everywhere by lunchtime.

I was accompanied by a Chichewa-speaking woman observer who found no sign of undue gender discrimination among her many interviews... most of the people were Lomwe, Sena or other ethnic/linguistic minorities. Virtually all those contacted knew Chichewa as a second language, however, so they could understand the instructions from the polling staff.

The vote-counting at the "quick count" center, Mitengo School at Khonjeni, with 4,635 registered voters, was the high spot of our 24-plus-hour day! The fun began with the burning of the contents of the discard boxes, which were all (five) dumped in one great funeral pyre. When the blaze erupted, loud cheers, catcalls, singing and joking ensued. This came, not from the public, but from the 45 polling officers who had labored all day patiently explaining procedures and helping people to vote.

Ballots from the five stations were counted on five tables by all the polling staff simultaneously, nine to a table. ...There was no attempt to bundle the ballots in 20's [as prescribed by the manual], but since UDF had obviously received more than half of the total votes cast, it did not seem all that important.

5. Mangochi (Southern Region)

Most stations devised their own way of organizing voters to cast their ballots. Some voting centers arranged (had voters line up) according to gender. In most cases where this occurred, women had to stay longer than men, and this occasionally slowed down the overall processing of voters. It was not clear whether this peculiar organization of voters was cultural, religious or sociologically based.

Overall, even when the letter of the electoral law was not followed, polling staff respected the spirit of the law. The staff was professional and demonstrated adequate understanding of their responsibilities. All of them confirmed that they received adequate briefing information to carry out their duties; most revealed an ingenious skill of improvising. Absenteeism among polling staff was low. In fact, out of the 50 polling stations visited in Mangochi, absenteeism was reported at only one.

6. Mulanje (Southern Region)

The 5 teams visited 67 centers out of 138, including most of the "hot spots" mentioned by the DC, noting that none of them revealed specific patterns of voting or results.

The number and location of the polling centers was satisfactory. The figure of 1000 voters per station should be maintained. Reducing this number in order to avoid long queues may double or treble the number of polling staff required, which would certainly be costly.

The polling staff was overall surprisingly good and the observers praised their effectiveness and capabilities despite continuous improvisation. Evidence can be found in the low percentage of null and void ballots, given the lack of civic education of the voters and the limited or absent experience in electoral choice.

No formal complaints were reported of intimidation or violence in the polling centers visited.

7. Ntchisi (Central Region)

Despite the overall success of the election in Ntchisi, following are a number of significant irregularities and problems which should be noted for the benefit of future elections in Malawi. ...There were not enough ballot boxes and polling stations in several centers. ...The method of voting by tearing off ballots and inserting them in envelopes was very cumbersome and took much more time than using one ballot and simply putting an X or a thumbprint for one's vote [would have].

The Electoral Commission failed to give clear instructions regarding the ballot for one presidential candidate who dropped out of the race. Some centers we observed were not doing anything about it, others were putting an X through the picture, while some others were removing the ballot altogether. It is estimated that several hundred ballots in Ntchisi were voided due to people voting for the "dropout."

In terms of registration, it appeared that women participated on an equal basis with men. In fact, at some centers, it seemed from a subjective judgement that there were more women than men waiting to vote. ...I would judge that about 20% of the election officials (around the country) were women. However, about 50% of the twenty-nine centers we visited had women in charge as Presiding Officers. None of the party monitors that we observed were women.

* * *

The reports of the observers made many similar technical observations about the way that the election was conducted. Some factors, like DC distribution of equipment, or the level of secondary training, varied by region. The announcement from the Electoral Commission regarding the treatment of the discard box (whether or not those votes were valid) was followed intermittently in many districts, adhered to in some districts, and completely ignored by other Commissioners. The counting and recording procedures, while detailed in the training manual and rehearsed during the training sessions, were ultimately followed only by convenience. All observers reported improvisation on existing rules. Given the fact that the results of the election were quite clear in each district, the improvisation certainly took place in an atmosphere of consensus.

The observers were debriefed on May 19 and 20. The regional drafting groups prepared statements to be sent to Lilongwe. The final statement was reviewed by over 100 observers, and a revised version of the statement was publicized at noon on May 20.

Nsanje District was the only place where serious problems were encountered. In Nsanje North and Nsanje Southwest, the report forms were not presented at the District Commissioner's office. In addition, several polling station items were reported missing. Two members of the Electoral Commission and international observers still in the district investigated. The Commission concluded that it did not have enough documentation to determine whether the results as reported were accurate, and it annulled the election in those two constituencies. Both constituencies would have seated MCP candidates; Nsanje North is where Gwanda Chakuamba lives. The MCP filed suit against the Electoral Commission to block its action. However, the Malawi High Court dismissed the case in Nsanje North and is expected to do the same in Nsanje Southwest. By-elections are scheduled for June 28. In addition to those constituencies, the seat in Machinga Northeast will be contested, as Bakili Muluzi, who won the parliamentary election, also won the presidential election.

E. Procedure Recommendations

IFES recommends that the Electoral Commission evaluate and document its experience with the voting and counting procedures used in the general elections. The current procedure has little more than familiarity to its advantage. Many voters had trouble inserting the ballots into the security envelopes; this could be avoided by instructing voters to fold the ballot, thus eliminating the need for envelopes. A single ballot with each choice, which the voter would mark either with a writing instrument or a thumb, would eliminate the need for a discard box and could be designed in many ways to increase voter comprehension. Doing away with the discard box would certainly prevent voters from casting ballots into the wrong box, and would eliminate the

numbers of valid ballots that must be destroyed rather than counted. Many observers suggested that the discard box used in this election was sturdy and secure enough that it could replace the current ballot box. This would provide more freedom in ballot design, and would not create any additional expense. In a climate of change and improvement, the Commission should carefully examine each aspect of the election process, record the activities undertaken, and provide the next Commission with concrete suggestions for improvement. It was not known at the time of this writing whether or not the Commission would be a permanent body, or by whom it would be organized.

In general, the working relationship that IFES had with the Electoral Commission are greatly improved from the referendum. This Commission was truly independent; its members were nominated by the political parties, but none of the Commissioners were political activists. Enforcement of the electoral law has been a challenge for the Commission since January. However, its ability to "win" in the questions on boundaries, military registration, and regulation of the MBC place it in an excellent position to secure independence for all future elections.

V. CONCLUSIONS

A. Organization Evaluation

The technical election assistance project in Malawi marked the second collaborative effort between IFES and the UN. In addition to these two organizations, the National Democratic Institute, AWEPA, and the Commonwealth Secretariat conducted sizeable election assistance projects. Such a high number of organizations and their attendant personnel is bound to cause conflict in terms of roles, responsibility and credit. In all efforts, the viability of an integrated, coordinated program should be considered at the project development stage.

As stated in the Introduction, IFES discussed its plans with NDI and the UNEAU. The level of dialogue between all three organizations was high from the fall of 1993. By consensus, the organizations settled on a formula employed during the referendum: the UN would be the international activities coordinator, IFES would provide a portion of the activities that the UN envisioned, and NDI would operate independently but share information freely with the UNEAS. Other NGOs would either participate in the UN-coordinated effort directly or maintain the same level of communication as NDI.

At the conclusion of this project, the value of working within the UN structure was not as high as it was during the referendum. Arriving consultants in April 1993 were folded into a network of long-term observers, a growing support staff, and a logistics infrastructure that already served the needs of Secretariat members. This year, consultants arriving in January began work at the same time as the support staff, even earlier than some support staff. This created a problem when consultants were unable to offer assistance where it was needed (because they had no office or equipment) or to arrange the logistical support they needed (because of confusion regarding roles and duties). Two weeks of advance preparation by the support staff prior to the arrival of the consultants might not have solved every problem, but it would have eased the tension between and among consultants and staff that began in January and came to a head in April.

A second problem arose at the beginning of the project when the UN was unable to complete its personnel roster. This issue is related to the previous paragraph in that the missing personnel included the Logistics Advisor. With due consideration to the fact that the South African election preparations made many candidates unavailable, the absence of the Logistics Advisor meant that the IFES consultants were unable to gain access to computer or transportation support for the first month of the project. More seriously, the recruitment by the UNEAS of one of the IFES consultants out of an existing position put IFES in a situation where it was potentially unable to fulfill its own project objectives. Despite the bureaucratic issues that arose on more than one occasion, IFES was satisfied to be able ultimately to provide the correct person for the job.

While the NDI and AWEPA projects were operated independently of the UNEAS project, the relationship between the UNEAS and the Commonwealth Secretariat advisors was never particularly clear. The Commonwealth Secretariat informed the UNEAS that advisors with the same titles as the UN advisors (Civic Education, Media, Election Administration) were coming to work with the Electoral Commission, but not under the UNEAS umbrella. The assumption that the UNEAS held the sole mandate for these activities caused some friction and unequal levels of cooperation between advisors from each Secretariat. IFES activities were affected positively and negatively by the presence of the Commonwealth advisors.

IFES would seriously consider the advantages and disadvantages of working within the UNEAS coordinating unit in future work in Malawi, since it has now been involved on two long-term projects. IFES could operate independently, while communicating its activities freely with the UN, in the manner that NDI and AWEPA used.

B. Review of Project Objectives

Increase the administrative and training capabilities of the Malawi Electoral Commission and staff. IFES consultants reviewed the Electoral Law, assisted with the language of the law's amendments, and prepared a training manual based on the new procedures. As part of the UN training team, IFES briefed election officials on a national and local level, continuously facilitating communications between District Commissioners and the Electoral Commission. Presiding Officers for over four thousand polling stations were trained by the team directly; each Presiding Officer was exposed at least once to all of the equipment and forms he or she would be working with well in advance of Election Day, and each Presiding Officer was trained in a manner that would enable them to train their staff and each other in future elections. In a similar fashion, IFES examined the registration procedures and facilitated their implementation, from participating in training sessions to developing procedures to close the register and make the register open for inspection. In each of these activities, IFES increased the capacity of the Commission by responding quickly to information requests and extending the training program with its resources, yet always under the aegis of the Commission.

Assist the Malawi Electoral Commission to implement a new system of voter registration and recording. The time required for the resolution of Malawi's constituency boundaries, against a fixed election date, reduced the ability of the IFES team to develop a new registration system. The Commission also decided, for the sake of simplicity, to retain the old system. Had the boundaries been defined earlier, there may have been an opportunity to make viable suggestions. The Electoral Commission is now in a better position to propose changes to the existing system.

Develop a capacity within the Commission and Malawi's journalist community to provide ongoing information about the transition and election process.

IFES recruited and trained a Press Secretary to the Electoral Commission, assisted him and members of the Commission in issuing regular press releases, conducting press conferences, and ensuring press coverage of Commission activities. The ability of the Commission to respond immediately in broadcast fashion was crucial to establishing itself as an independent body which would assert its authority. IFES was instrumental in obtaining coverage of the Constitutional Conference as well as the nomination ceremonies. IFES assisted the Commission in monitoring the activities of the MBC, raising its coverage of the registration, the campaign and the elections to an unprecedented level. For the night of the election, IFES set up a first-ever network between all of the districts and MBC reporters for continuous coverage. Although not all of the activities envisioned in January were realized, the adaptability to constantly changing circumstances ensured that IFES was performing appropriate activities at the right time.

In addition, IFES organized two series of seminars for journalists to develop an understanding among them about the role and responsibility of media sources. In addition to discussion about election coverage techniques, IFES spent time providing needed information on the basic elements of news reporting.

Monitor compliance with and administration of Malawi's new registration regulations. Seven IFES observers joined the Joint International Observer group in February to watch the registration process unfold. They reported regularly to the Secretariat headquarters in Lilongwe, and they investigated complaints as directed. Four of the observers were able to remain in Malawi for the extension of the registration period, during which the majority of eligible Malawians registered.

Observe compliance with new election regulations as well as international standards for free and fair elections.

IFES Technical Assistance Project:
Malawi
Final Activity Report

Five of the original seven IFES observers returned to Malawi in early May as part of the Joint International Observer Group. They were able to use the experience gained in February and March to anchor and deploy up to 50 incoming colleagues as Senior District Observers. The sixth of the original observer team remained past the extension to fill the position of Logistics Advisor. His intervention at a turning point in the project ensured that the returning as well as new observers were received and organized in a professional, efficient manner.

Overall, the IFES project fulfilled its objectives in the areas of election administration and observation. It made a start, but did not completely fulfill, its objective in voter registration. IFES exceeded its objective in public information. In addition, the cooperation between the many organizations on site for the past seven months in Malawi was positive.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Issues In Covering the General Elections by Peter V. Miller, PhD.

ISSUES IN COVERING THE GENERAL ELECTIONS

Peter V. Miller, PhD.

Northwestern University

USA

Paper presented to the conference on The Role of the Press in
Democratic Societies, Blantyre, Malawi, February 21-25, 1994.

This paper examines issues related to the coverage of the upcoming general elections in Malawi. It is divided into three sections, the first dealing with recommendations for election campaign news, the second concerning more general criteria for judging the quality of news stories, and the third offering some ideas about the evolving relationship between the media and government in Malawi. My aim here is not to criticize, but to provide some suggestions based on study of the electoral campaign process in other parts of the world.

Election Campaign News

The role of the media in election campaigns is to inform the electorate so that they can decide how to vote knowledgeably. In the United States, the media often are criticized for failing to give voters useful information for making their decisions. Instead, it is argued that the media focus inordinately on scandal, the "horse race," and campaign trivia. Party manifestos (or "platforms," as they are known in the States) may be ignored, or the candidates may be allowed by the press to ignore the "issues" and engage in slick advertising and demagoguery. When the campaign is over, it may not be clear to the voters what the different candidates will try to do if elected.

In recent years, these criticisms of the media in the United States have been leveled also at the media in other democracies.

Butler and Ranney (1992), for example, speak of a worldwide "Americanization" of politics, in which marketing research is used to discover keys to election victory, and televised advertising is employed to deliver the successful messages. The press, if they wish to cover the issues, are frustrated in their efforts to do so by tight control of the information released by campaigns, and they are coopted through public relations wizardry.

In Malawi, marketing research and televised campaign advertising will not be factors in the general elections. Still, the media here face challenges in providing voters with information that can help them rationally decide which parties and candidates to vote for. As you go about the work of campaign coverage, let me offer a few guidelines to keep in mind.

First, publish and then repeat what the candidates say they will do to address the problems facing Malawi. It may seem obvious, but the candidates' issue stands often get lost in the coverage of campaign rallies. For example, what program does each candidate advocate to tackle the enormous problems of population growth, malnutrition, education, housing, transportation, employment and medical care? Who has ideas to address the issue of soil depletion that necessitates the use of costly fertilizer that few in the villages can afford? Who offers a program of development that can begin to break the cycle of poverty gripping Malawi and envision a better future for the majority of the population, the millions of children in the villages and towns across your country?

Report, analyze and compare each party's ideas on such issues. Campaigns ought to be about allowing the electorate to judge which program will be most beneficial for themselves and for the country. Because the problems are so profound and complicated, the voters need your help in assessing which programs are credible. Get opinions from experts on the direction each party proposes and the feasibility of the programs. Send the parties a standard set of questions about the major issues facing Malawi and publish their answers side-by-side so that the voters can easily compare them. Use this information-gathering approach to formulate your own editorial judgments about who best can lead Malawi at this crucial juncture.

Of course, many of you are already involved in producing information of this kind. But after perusing the newspapers and listening to MBC for the last two months, I believe that a better job can be done. In my view, reporting which party is likely to win or lose the election is less important than making certain that the ideas the parties offer get adequate exposure. Public opinion polls, to the extent that they are done at all, should seek to identify the voters' concerns so that you can judge which parties are addressing them.

Finally, given that this election is an unprecedented experience for your country, let me suggest that some of your energy be devoted to teaching voters the basics. The campaign will matter not at all if people do not register and vote. You should help and remind the electorate to become part of the

process and to understand the mechanics of voting. At this stage in the election season, I surmise that many eligible citizens do not know that they have to register to vote, and that they will be voting separately for Parliament and for President. You can play an important role in basic civic education, and I hope that you will.

Standards for News Coverage

Whether we are concerned with election news or other topics, there ought to be some measures that we can use to judge the quality of coverage. What goals should we have for news stories? Let me suggest three criteria for your consideration and debate, recognizing that others at this conference will have their own proposals.

Accuracy. Most basically, news stories ought to feature correct information on the "who, what, when and where" questions. Names should be spelled correctly, cutlines should refer to the correct pictures, times and places should be correctly reported. The most fundamental information should be checked and rechecked. Beginning reporters at the City News Bureau in Chicago have been told for years that, "If your mother says she loves you, check it out." You cannot expect readers to believe your interpretations of complex issues if you cannot get the simplest facts straight. My observation of news coverage here in Malawi suggests that there is a general need for more accurate, cleaner copy. Accuracy is a continual struggle for any news organization no

matter where in the world, and so you are not alone as you make efforts in this direction.

Fairness. News stories should represent all viewpoints as completely as possible, giving each one its appropriate weight. Human beings have selective attention, and their predispositions are bound to enter into the reporting and editing of events. We probably cannot hope to remove all elements of subjectivity from news gathering and reporting. But we can consciously endeavor to be complete and fair to opposing viewpoints. When a story reports a charge by one political candidate about another, there ought to be an effort to report a response from the one charged. If a candidate for one party defects to another, coverage of the event should feature reactions from both parties involved. If an investigative piece charges a politician with some form of chicanery, the politician's reactions to the story should appear in it. Remarkably few news stories I have seen since coming here meet this criterion.

I do not mean to imply that news stories must mindlessly balance viewpoints even if some have no credibility. Alternative views should be represented to the extent that they are credible. For example, if a public figure wishes to deny making a remark in a public speech, the denial should be printed, but it should be outweighed by quotations from those who witnessed the remark. The aim is to give all sides their due weight.

Relevance. Finally, let me suggest for your consideration that we judge the quality of news coverage by the extent to which it makes public affairs relevant to the lives of the audience.

In part, this criterion implies that news coverage should strive harder to come to grips with the daily problems of citizens in Malawi. The problems of village life are generally absent from the pages of the newspapers. The news agenda, it seems to me, needs to be broadened to take better account of the issues facing the vast majority of people in this country.

But, in addition, the complexities of foreign exchange or Constitutional principles must be "brought home" to the Chichewa, as well as the English readership. Abstract matters like the powers of the Presidency have enormous implications for all Malawi citizens. Journalists must find ways to spell out the implications rather than assuming that a large portion of the audience will never understand them.

Media and Government

This election season gives us occasion to reflect upon the evolving relationship between media and government in Malawi. After years of official censorship, death penalties for erroneous journalism, routine imprisonment and Orwellian thought control, the media now have the opportunity to play an important, independent role in the civic life of this country. I hope that you will take the opportunity seriously, and adopt a role somewhere in between the extremes of serving as a mouthpiece for the government and purveying cynicism and scandal.

In the United States, the Vietnam War era followed by Watergate and Iran-Contra have led to an almost corrosive

relationship between media and government. Faced with years of official lies, journalists have a tendency to treat all government pronouncements with cynicism. Official mendacity caused the problem, but the journalistic community has got to be part of the solution. Media and government must be adversarial in some ways and cooperative in others if the nation's problems are to be addressed and the public is to be served. "Skepticism, not cynicism," as R.W. Apple, Washington Bureau Chief of the New York Times puts it, ought to be the journalist's attitude.

In Malawi, you have even more reason to doubt and fear the government. I hope that you will continue to probe and expose past and current abuses of power. But I also hope that, when it is appropriate, you can see your way clear to working with government in order to benefit the people. One possible route of cooperation will illustrate my point.

The Electoral Commission has an enormous set of responsibilities in the ongoing election season. It must set up rules and referee the contest, as well as providing civic education. From what I can tell, the Commission consists of serious, well-meaning people who want to ensure a fair and free election. Like other government institutions, of course, the Commission deserves your careful scrutiny, and you must report mistakes and abuses of power. At the same time, I hope that where it is appropriate, you can act in partnership with the Commission to ensure fair and free elections.

I have two things in mind. First, I hope that you will use your resources to help in the education of voters, as I mentioned

before. Second, if the going gets tough and the independence of the Electoral Commission is threatened or its legitimate directives are undermined, I hope that the Commission will be able to rely upon your help in correcting the situation. If law enforcement authorities fail to respond to the Commission's requests for action, I hope that you will report the failure. The Commission draws its authority from the law, but its real power, in my view, lies in its ability to appeal to the public if its attempts to referee the electoral contest are ignored or interfered with. You are crucial to the success of these appeals.

There is talk these days about the possible pernicious impact in the election of foreign public relations consultants hired by one of the parties. As a foreigner who has advised the Electoral Commission on public information, I want to tell you what I have told them so that my appeal for cooperation is not seen as an attempt to manipulate.

I told the Commissioners to follow two rules: always tell the truth, and facilitate the work of journalists as much as possible. I am just an advisor, and I cannot guarantee that mistakes will not be made. But my observations to date suggest that the Commission wants to do the right thing. At this crucial, unprecedented juncture in Malawi's history, I hope that a partnership of this arm of government and the independent press will lay the foundation for a peaceful, free and fair transition of power. If so, this election may establish the precedent that government and media can work together as equal partners.

APPENDIX B

United Nations Electoral Assistance Secretariat Release on Voter Registration

EMBARGOED -
NOT FOR USE BEFORE 11am MONDAY 18 APRIL 1994

UNITED NATIONS ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE SECRETARIAT
UNDP
PO BOX 30135
LILONGWE 3
MALAWI

Tel: (265) 783 500 Fax: (265) 783 637
Direct Line - Tel/Fax - (265) 781 885

The Joint International Observer Group (JIOG) which is monitoring the electoral process in Malawi, publishes its Interim Report, based on reports from thirty observers, from eleven different countries, who between them visited 31% of the Registration Centres - 763 of the 2451 centres - and investigated every complaint drawn to their attention.

The Joint International Observer Group reports as follows:

The final total of Malawian citizens registered to vote is roughly equivalent to the actual number of separate registrations for last year's referendum, taking into account the 18 to 21 year olds, and, at almost 80% of the projected maximum, is a respectable figure.

There were a number of flaws in the registration process and administration, including a lack of plastic envelopes and of transfer certificates at a number of centres, but these did not detract significantly from the efficiency of the administrative process.

The unexpected initial reluctance to register on the part of the majority of citizens, coupled with the extremely slow start of the civic education programme, jeopardised the whole process, which was only rescued by the two week extension.

The JIOG believes that the prohibition by the Inspector-General on police officers registering contravenes the electoral law and that ways should still be found for those officers to register and vote who wish to do so. The JIOG is also concerned that the initial ban on military personnel registering inhibited them from registering in numbers even when the ban was lifted.

The JIOG has noted particularly the efforts of the Electoral Commission to deal with the many problems connected with the early stages of the electoral process and it commends the Mrs Justice Msosa and the Commissioners for their forthright stand on the issue of the registration of members of the

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and his family in the Northern Region originally registered at two separate centres. It is also apparent that Ministers have not always clearly differentiated between their official Government duties and their political role and have used the civil service apparatus, including the presence of DCs, when campaigning in support of their candidature, or that of a colleague.

We note that the Commission has already expressed its concern on some aspects of the involvement in the electoral process of the traditional authorities. Chiefs and Village Headmen rightly have considerable respect and influence by virtue of their position. To maintain that traditional respect and influence in a multi-party political system requires that they do not use, nor threaten to use, their powers in order to secure support for a party which would presumably contravene Section 115 (c) clauses (ix) and (x) of the electoral law. Observers have reported cases where meetings for one or other party have been effectively blocked by traditional authorities. Also, in a number of cases Registration Certificates have been confiscated by Chiefs or Village Headmen. These certificates must all be returned to their owners.

There are also confirmed reports of Nyau dancers performing at places and at times when their presence is seen as support for the MCP, particularly when they are remunerated by MCP supporters. The JIOG acknowledges that this is a delicate matter in which a careful line must be drawn between genuine involvement in the campaigning process to the benefit of the whole community, and political use to inhibit support and activity for one party or another. A country's culture is, of course, important, which is why it must not be misused and cheapened by being made partisan.

The JIOG is also concerned that the last minute availability of nomination papers caused difficulties for some parties and some candidates. We note, however, that the Electoral Commission was aware of the problem and made appropriate provision for those it believed were genuinely disadvantaged. There was some Observer concern about the content and administration of the English test for prospective candidates and whether it was a satisfactory means of ensuring compliance with the electoral law.

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APPENDIX C

Voter Registration Tally

	NAME OF DISTRICT	NUMBER OF CONSTITUENCIES	NUMBER OF CENTERS	REGISTERED VOTERS	POPULATION 18 & OVER	% OF REG. VOTERS	TOTAL POPULATION	REFERENDUM VOTERS
1	BLANTYRE	10	120	267599	364407	73.43	729189	230408
2	CHIKWAWA	6	81	121318	184778	65.66	391770	106873
3	CHIRADZULU	5	54	98812	126243	78.27	260879	82572
4	CHITIPA	5	73	53462	52397	102.03	119725	41073
5	DEDZA	8	129	182812	236869	77.18	509343	139440
6	DOWA	7	86	148090	189099	78.31	398819	139732
7	KARONGA	5	77	84501	85938	98.33	183080	65376
8	KASUNGU	9	109	180482	200791	89.88	400082	179542
9	LILONGWE	17	250	457595	577241	79.27	1207998	384780
10	MACHINGA	10	142	258690	306838	84.31	637336	201239
11	MANGOCHI	10	118	256162	306328	83.62	614222	201319
12	MCHINJI	6	77	124806	147990	84.33	309033	116425
13	MULANJE	11	138	257006	371869	69.11	789225	191366
14	MWANZA	4	59	49192	68787	71.51	150301	41525
15	MZIMBA	12	254	272908	257543	105.97	538443	134362
16	NKHATA-BAY	7	66	72051	82579	87.25	171185	60211
17	NKHOTAKOTA	5	80	87841	95967	91.53	195486	79336
18	NSANJE	5	67	71305	119906	59.47	252792	58853
19	NTCHEU	7	108	129918	205218	63.31	443762	100971
20	NTCHISI	4	65	56893	69642	81.69	149493	52053
21	RUMPHI	4	65	62273	59662	104.38	117385	51542
22	SALIMA	5	51	92950	115420	80.53	233990	78592
23	THYOLO	7	90	174357	253491	68.78	534539	153485
24	ZOMBA	8	124	214253	270139	79.31	546238	170731
	24 DISTRICTS	177	2483	3775256	4749142	79.49	9882296	3061816
	NORTHERN (5)	33	535	545195	538119	101.31	1127798	352564
	CENTRAL (9)	68	955	1461367	1838237	79.50	3848007	1270881
	SOUTHERN (10)	76	993	1768694	2372786	74.54	4906491	1438371

27 May 1994

APPENDIX D

UNEAS News Release on Election Observation 1200hrs, May 20, 1994

UNITED NATIONS ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE SECRETARIAT
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NEWS RELEASE - IMMEDIATE

1200hrs, 20 May 1994

**INTERNATIONAL OBSERVER GROUP SAYS:
"POLL EXPRESSES WISHES OF MALAWI PEOPLE"**

The Joint International Observer Group (JIOG) deployed over three hundred observers from forty countries to observe Malawi's Parliamentary and Presidential elections on 17 May 1994. Between them these observers visited over half the polling centres across the whole of Malawi, and their considered assessment of the democratic process in the country therefore derives from a thorough and intensive observer operation.

JIOG began its work in February and issued an Interim Report on 18th April covering its observation of the registration period and the initial stages of the election campaign. Today's statement should be read in conjunction with that report.

On the 17th May 1994 the Malawian people took a further deliberate step in the transformation of the democratic structures of their country. They did this in an exemplary way: peacefully, and with a sense of common purpose in the exercise of their democratic opportunity. The turnout - being over 80% of registered voters - demonstrated the determination of the Malawian electors to participate in the first multi-party elections for over thirty years.

The International Observers are unanimously satisfied that the election results will reflect and express accurately the wishes of the Malawian electorate on polling day. The International Observers congratulate the Malawian people, their leaders and their officials on this further step in the process of peaceful transition.

JIOG commends the Electoral Commission, under the leadership of Mrs Justice Msosa, for its steadfast and effective conduct of the elections. Its work was vital to the democratic process. It also notes the resourcefulness and professionalism of the vast majority of officials involved in the conduct of the elections; the spirit of co-operation among the party monitors at the polling stations; and the generally unobtrusive assistance of the security forces on the day.

Despite the overall atmosphere of co-operation and the basic soundness of the polling day processes, the JIOG wishes to make a number of comments.

The period before polling day has been the cause of most concern. JIOG drew attention in its Interim Report to a number of disturbing incidents which could have influenced the outcome of the elections. Observers continued to investigate allegations of intimidation and abuse. A high proportion, mainly emanating from the MCP, were found to be unsubstantiated, either because they appeared to have been invented or because they were based on the wrong interpretation of innocent actions. The misuse of government resources by the MCP continued. Where appropriate, JIOG reports will be passed to the Commission for their continued action. It is important to note, however, that all reported incidents declined in the weeks before polling day and that there were fewer reported instances of offences in relation to registration certificates. There were, however, occasional well founded reports, particularly from the south, of MCP pressures on traditional authorities to use their influence in turn on voters.

As to election day itself, JIOG makes the following observations:

- *there was evidence of registered voters who were well under the age of eighteen - it was difficult to determine whether or not this was encouraged for political reasons;*
- *there were examples of electors arriving and being prevented from voting because their names were already crossed off the register;*
- *a number of voters - perhaps as many as 1% of the electorate - wasted their vote by placing it in the discard box in error; there were confusing messages during the day as to whether or not these envelopes should be extracted and included in the count as valid votes;*
- *there was some evidence of understaffing at polling stations and an occasional instance of party monitors assisting in the voting process;*
- *some materials arrived late causing delays and difficulties - although various ways were found to ensure that this did not seriously disrupt the process;*
- *there were varying standards for dealing with the counting process, and difficulties in keeping an accurate account of the constituency totals in some DCs' offices; we await the results of the Commission's enquiry into two results in Nsanje;*
- *some voters had to wait many hours to vote, partly as a consequence of there being only one polling booth for each station.*

The media continued to be a cause for concern. The reporting of MANA showed an imbalance towards the Government. The Malawi Broadcasting Corporation has undergone an astonishing transformation but its selection of news stories and the varying weight given to campaigning reports still leaves much to be desired. MBC's coverage of the election results must, however, be praised for giving immediacy and transparency. The "independent" press has played a key role in opening up the democratic process but has too often spread more heat than light and has on occasion been unpleasantly intrusive.

The members of the Joint International Observer Group wish to place on record their grateful appreciation of the courtesy, the warm welcome and the helpfulness of the Electoral Commission, the parties, the election officials, and the people of Malawi.

APPENDIX E

1994 Presidential and Parliamentary General Election Results

1994 PRESIDENTIAL GENERAL ELECTIONS RESULTS
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RECEIVED JUN 13 1994

NAME OF PARTY	NORTH		CENTER		SOUTH		NATIONAL	
	%	VOTES	%	VOTES	%	VOTES	%	VOTES
DR. H. K. BANDA	7.30	33650	64.31	743739	16.09	218964	33.45	996353
MR. B. MULUZI	4.52	20837	27.81	321581	78.04	1062336	47.16	1404754
MR. C. CHIHANA	87.80	404837	7.50	86766	5.23	71259	18.90	562862
MR. K. KALUA	0.38	1754	0.45	5161	0.64	8709	0.52	15624
VALID VOTES	98.64	461078	97.56	1156539	98.09	1361268	97.97	2978805
NULL AND VOID	1.36	6341	2.44	28977	1.91	26462	2.03	61780
TOTAL VOTES CAST	85.73	467419	81.12	1185516	78.46	1387730	80.54	3040665
TOTAL REGISTERED	14.44	545195	38.71	1461367	46.85	1768694		3775256

1994 PARLIAMENTARY GENERAL ELECTIONS RESULTS
=====

SEATS
WON

36

55

84

NAME OF PARTY	NORTH		CENTER		SOUTH		NATIONAL	
	%	VOTES	%	VOTES	%	VOTES	%	VOTES
AFORD	84.91	384818	7.22	82132	6.78	92126	18.94	558875
CSR	0.28	1289	0.08	841	0.01	188	0.07	2118
MCP	8.23	37291	64.40	732824	18.38	222863	33.65	992788
MDP	0.54	2443	0.11	1284	0.24	3253	0.24	6980
MDU	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.02	323	0.01	323
MNDP	0.04	174	0.24	2885	0.00	54	0.10	2913
UDF	5.31	24039	27.89	315143	75.83	1030845	48.44	1370027
UFMD	0.67	3044	0.07	840	0.44	5875	0.33	9859
VALID VOTES	98.53	452850	97.39	1137867	97.58	1359405	97.85	2950322
NULL AND VOID	1.47	6758	2.61	30506	2.42	33863	2.35	70917
TOTAL VOTES CAST	84.32	459708	79.96	1168473	78.76	1393058	80.03	3021239
TOTAL REGISTERED	14.44	545195	38.71	1461367	46.85	1768694		3778258

2 vacant - Nsanje N & Nsanje SW - results annulled.